

ON THE

(2.)

I M M E N S I T Y

OF THE

S U P R E M E B E I N G.

A

P O E T I C A L E S S A Y.

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By CHRISTOPHER SMART, M.A.

Fellow of *Pembroke-Hall* in the University of *Cambridge*.

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T H E T H I R D E D I T I O N.

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L O N D O N:

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MDCCLVII.





# A Clause of Mr. SEATON's Will,

Dated Oct. 8. 1738.

**I** Give my Kislinbury Estate to the University of Cambridge for ever: the Rents of which shall be disposed of yearly by the Vice-Chancellor for the time being, as he the Vice-Chancellor, the Master of Clare Hall, and the Greek Professor for the time being, or any two of them shall agree. Which three persons aforesaid shall give out a Subject, which Subject shall for the first Year be one or other of the Perfections or Attributes of the Supreme Being, and so the succeeding Years, till the Subject is exhausted; and afterwards the Subject shall be either Death, Judgment, Heaven, Hell, Purity of heart, &c. or whatever else may be judged by the Vice-Chancellor, Master of Clare Hall, and Greek Professor to be most conducive to the honour of the Supreme Being and recommendation of Virtue. And they shall yearly dispose of the Rent of the above Estate to that Master of Arts, whose Poem on the Subject given shall be best approved by them. Which Poem I ordain to be always in English, and to be printed; the expence of which shall be deducted out of the product of the Estate, and the residue given as a reward for the Composer of the Poem, or Ode, or Copy of Verses.

**W**E the underwritten, do assign Mr. SEATON's Reward to C. SMART M. A. for his Poem on *The Immensity of the Supreme Being*, and direct the said Poem to be printed, according to the tenor of the Will.

April 20. 1751.

Edm. Keene Vice-Chancellor.  
J. Wilcox Master of Clare Hall.



A Charge of Mr. BEAUFORT's Will

Dated Oct. 8. 1793





ON THE  
IMMENSITY  
OF THE  
SUPREME BEING.

ONCE more I dare to rouse the founding string  
*The Poet of my God*---- Awake my glory,  
Awake my lute and harp---my self shall wake,  
Soon as the stately night-exploding bird  
In lively lay sings welcome to the dawn.

Lift ye! how nature with ten thousand tongues  
Begins the grand thanksgiving, Hail, all hail,  
Ye tenants of the forest and the field!

My



My fellow subjects of th' eternal King,  
 I gladly join your Mattins, and with you  
 Confess his presence, and report his praise.

O Thou, who or the Lambkin, or the Dove  
 When offer'd by the lowly, meek, and poor,  
 Prefer'st to Pride's whole hecatomb, accept  
 This mean Essay, nor from thy treasure-house  
 Of Glory' immense the Orphan's mite exclude.

What tho' th' Almighty's regal throne be rais'd  
 High o'er yon azure Heav'n's exalted dome  
 By mortal eye unken'd --- where East nor West  
 Nor South, nor blust'ring North has breath to blow;  
 Albeit He there with Angels, and with Saints  
 Hold conference, and to his radiant host  
 Ev'n face to face stand visibly confest:  
 Yet know that nor in Presence or in Pow'r  
 Shines He less perfect here; 'tis Man's dim eye  
 That makes th' obscurity. He is the same,  
 Alike in all his Universe the same.

Whether



Whether the mind along the spangled Sky  
 Measures her pathless walk, studious to view  
 Thy works of vaster fabrick, where the Planets  
 Weave their harmonious rounds, their march directing  
 Still faithful, still inconstant to the Sun;  
 Or where the Comet thro' space infinite  
 (Tho' whirling worlds oppose and globes of fire)  
 Darts, like a javelin, to his destin'd goal.  
 Or where in Heav'n above the Heav'n of Heav'ns  
 Burn brighter Suns, and goodlier Planets roll  
 With Satellits more glorious --- Thou art there.

Or whether on the Ocean's boist'rous back  
 Thou ride triumphant, and with out-stretch'd arm  
 Curb the wild winds and discipline the billows,  
 The suppliant Sailor finds Thee there, his chief,  
 His only help --- When Thou rebuk'st the storm ---  
 It ceases --- and the vessel gently glides  
 Along the glassy level of the calm.

Oh!



Oh! cou'd I search the bosom of the sea,  
 Down the great depth descending; there thy works  
 Wou'd also speak thy residence; and there  
 Wou'd I thy servant, like the still profound,  
 Astonish'd into silence muse thy praise!  
 Behold! behold! th' unplanted garden round  
 Of vegetable coral, sea-flow'rs gay,  
 And shrubs of amber from the pearl-pav'd bottom  
 Rise richly varied, where the finny race  
 In blithe security their gambols play:  
 While high above their heads Leviathan  
 The terror and the glory of the main  
 His pastime takes with transport, proud to see  
 The ocean's vast dominion all his own.

Hence thro' the genial bowels of the earth  
 Easy may fancy pass; till at thy mines  
*Gani* or *Raolconda* she arrive,  
 And from the adamant's imperial blaze  
 Form weak ideas of her maker's glory.

Next



Next to *Pegu* or *Ceylon* let me rove,  
 Where the rich ruby (deem'd by Sages old  
 Of Sovereign virtue) sparkles ev'n like *Sirius*  
 And blushes into flames. Thence will I go  
 To undermine the treasure-fertile womb  
 Of the huge *Pyrenean*, to detect  
 The Agat and the deep-intrenched gem  
 Of kindred Jasper --- Nature in them both  
 Delights to play the Mimic on herself;  
 And in their veins she oft pourtrays the forms  
 Of leaning hills, of trees erect, and streams  
 Now stealing softly on, now thund'ring down  
 In desperate cascade with flow'rs and beasts  
 And all the living landskip of the vale:  
 In vain thy pencil *Claudio*, or *Poussin*,  
 Or thine, immortal *Guido*, wou'd essay  
 Such skill to imitate--- it is the hand  
 Of God himself--- for God himself is there.

B

Hence



Hence with the ascending springs let me advance,  
 Thro' beds of magnets, minerals and spar,  
 Up to the mountain's summit, there t' indulge  
 Th' ambition of the comprehensive eye,  
 That dares to call th' Horizon all her own.  
 Behold the forest, and the expansive verdure  
 Of yonder level lawn, whose smooth-shorn sod  
 No object interrupts, unless the oak  
 His lordly head uprears, and branching arms  
 Extends --- Behold in regal solitude,  
 And pastoral magnificence he stands  
 So simple! and so great! the under-wood  
 Of meaner rank an awful distance keep.  
 Yet Thou art there, yet God himself is there  
 Ev'n on the bush (tho' not as when to *Moses*  
 He shone in burning Majesty reveal'd  
 Nathless conspicuous in the Linnet's throat  
 Is his unbounded goodness --- Thee her Maker,  
 Thee her preserver chants she in her song;

While



While all the emulative vocal tribe  
 The grateful lesson learn --- no other voice  
 Is heard, no other sound --- for in attention  
 Buried, ev'n babbling *Echo* holds her peace.

Now from the plains, where th' unbounded prospect  
 Gives liberty her utmost scope to range,  
 Turn we to yon enclosures, where appears  
 Chequer'd variety in all her forms,  
 Which the vague mind attract and still suspend  
 With sweet perplexity. What are yon tow'rs  
 The work of lab'ring man and clumsy art  
 Seen with the ring-dove's nest --- on that tall beech  
 Her penile house the feather'd Artist builds ---  
 The rocking winds molest her not; for see,  
 With such due poize the wond'rous fabrick's hung,  
 That, like the compass in the bark, it keeps  
 True to itself and stedfast ev'n in storms.  
 Thou ideot that asserts, there is no God,  
 View and be dumb for ever ---

Go



Go bid *Vitruvius* or *Palladio* build  
 The bee his mansion, or the ant her cave ---  
 Go call *Correggio*, or let *Titian* come  
 To paint the hawthorn's bloom, or teach the cherry  
 To blush with just vermilion --- hence away ---  
 Hence ye prophane! for God himself is here.  
 Vain were th' attempt, and impious to trace  
 Thro' all his works th' Artificer Divine ---  
 And tho' nor shining sun, nor twinkling star  
 Bedeck'd the crimson curtains of the sky;  
 Tho' neither vegetable, beast, nor bird  
 Were extant on the surface of this ball,  
 Nor lurking gem beneath; tho' the great sea  
 Slept in profound stagnation, and the air  
 Had left no thunder to pronounce its maker;  
 Yet man at home, within himself, might find  
 The Deity immense, and in that frame  
 So fearfully, so wonderfully made,  
 See and adore his providence and pow'r ---



I see, and I adore--- O God most bounteous!

O infinite of Goodness and of Glory!

The knee, that thou hast shap'd, shall bend to Thee,

The tongue, which thou hast tun'd, shall chant thy praise,

And, thine own image, the immortal soul,

Shall consecrate herself to Thee for ever.

*F I N I S.*







BOOKS written by Mr. SMART,  
and fold by Mr. *Newbery*.

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